

## AT THE THEATERS LAST NIGHT

## NATIONAL.

## Ruth Chatterton in "Daddy Long-Legs."

The cultivated will patronize classic drama; the morbid and the curious will flock to the risqué and the sensational; the overworked brain will find pleasure in a relaxation in "mellow frothy and mirth-provoking, but it classes as drawn-out by a powerful magnet to the play which tells a tender tale of love, strengthening one's faith that even in this age of commercialism romance is still the well-spring of life.

Never was this truth more obvious than yesterday afternoon when a capacity audience filled the New National Theater for the premiere of "Daddy Long-Legs," and settled with deeper sighs of happiness and satisfaction as each one of the four acts of Miss Jean Webster's story came to the stage.

The comedy brought the quaint little story a happy issue for a most winsome little maid and her middle-aged lover. When Miss Webster's story first appeared in serial form in a current magazine, it attracted a deal of attention by virtue of its originality and the appeal of its heart. In novel form it reached a still wider field and gained in popularity so that nobody was very much surprised when Henry Brewster, the young orphan of the John Grier Home, whose superior mentality and quiet originality was pointed out to the wealthy bachelor, and aristocrat, Jervis Pendleton, by his friend, Miss Webster, with the result that the bachelor sent the girl through college. The one condition of his generosity was that she should not know the name of her benefactor, nor expect any personal acknowledgment from him, although she was to keep him informed of her progress through letters addressed to him under the pseudonym of John Smith.

Now Judy was much too original to adhere to any such rule, so she conformed to in her own mind a nice, benevolent old gentleman with a white fringe around his bald head, and of such an insufferable cadence of his friendly and lanky physique that she dubbed him "Daddy Long-Legs," and thus addressed him when she poured out all the confidences of her sweet young heart to him in letters which were never answered save with brief instructions through his secretary. Notwithstanding all this Pendleton became so interested in the quaintness of the girl's letters that he banked in her society for several years without arousing her suspicions that it is he who is "Daddy Long-Legs," until, through the insufferable cadence of his friendly and lanky physique that she dubbed him "Daddy Long-Legs," and thus addressed him when she poured out all the confidences of her sweet young heart to him in letters which were never answered save with brief instructions through his secretary.

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For instance, one feels inclined to rise and strangle the deceitful Mrs. Bumpstead, matron of the John Grier Home, who "darlings" her charges when the trustees are in hearing, and treats them like scavengers, when she has them alone. Just as real as the one who stands in mortal terror of matron and trustees alike. And when the playwright transfers the scene, in the second act, to the girls' study at college, she gives a most realistic picture of the irresponsible nature of Judy's wealthy roommates, and of the snobbishness of their relatives who come to visit them, while in the third act, when we have arrived in the old-fashioned yard of Lock Willow Farm, with its rows of sunflowers and hollyhocks, we find Mrs. Semple, the nurse of Jervis Pendleton, a golden-haired babyhood days just the simple, gentle, old-fashioned soul we would like to give the care of our own babies, and Jervis Pendleton himself, whether in his handsome library or in the study, or visiting Judy at Lock Willow, is a fine, manly figure whom we began to like the minute he first showed his appreciation of her, and determined to give her a chance.

As for Judy herself, well, in the creation of her Mr. Miller's charming young star has assuredly come into her own. Judy and Miss Chatterton are one, that one is a young girl trimming over with originality and that evasive thing we call charm; a spirited girl capable of deep emotions; a girl whose heart is tender for those who are alone and lonely and suffer injustice—a thoroughly human girl whom Jervis Pendleton could not have loved for the life of him.

Miss Chatterton is pretty; she is dainty; she has a remarkably winsome personality and a voice that lingers in one's ear long after she has stopped speaking, and she has another quality which is going to make her future a big and splendid thing, and that quality is sympathy. She is an exquisite artist and there is no wonder that Henry Miller settled into a deep corner, where he thought nobody could see him, and watched her first metropolitan performance in "Daddy Long-Legs" with such obvious pleasure and satisfaction.

He has staged a number of appealing little drama with elegance and taste, and has surrounded Miss Chatterton with a most capable cast. Frederick Truesdell presents a manly and technically artistic portrait of the young bachelor, while Charles Townbridge, as James McBride, gives a convincing portrayal of an unpeppery cut; Miss Cora Watersport is effective as his sister, Miss Jennie; Eugene is excellent as Miss Fritchard; Miss Ethel Martin and Miss Agnes Miller made the roles of the aristocratic Pendleton mother and daughter stand out with distinctness; Mrs. Jacques Martin in her practice of Mrs. Semple, and Miss Margaret Sayre is capital as the matron of the John Grier Home.

The little orphan children impersonated by Miss Lillian Ross, Miss Ruth McVine, Miss Virginia Smith, Miss Maud Keen and Master Lewis Smith give the asylum a most realistic air of deprivation and hardship, and even the minor roles all in such capable hands as to make Mr. Miller's production an entirely artistic and effective one.

In its direct heart appeal and the quaintness and originality of its leading characters, Miss Webster's romantic comedy, with its enigmatic title of "Daddy Long-Legs," gives every promise of equaling, if not surpassing, the appeal which has been made by "Fog of My Heart."

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## POLI'S.

"The Governor's Boss." Though former Gov. Sulzer was not visible in the audience that packed Poli's Theater yesterday, as the first performance on any stage of "The Governor's Boss," a very good idea of his appearance could be gained from the remarkably clever make-up of Mr. William D. Corbett, whose artistic and impressive port-

## BELASCO.

## "Fanny's First Play."

In "Fanny's First Play," offered at the Belasco Theater last night, the typical and incomparable Shaw was flashed with all its usual brilliance and audacity, ridiculing British respectability, British traditions, religion, plays, playwrights, and dramatic critics to the positive actual enjoyment of the audience. If it is not a play, as we are informed it is not one of the critics provided in the piece itself, why then so much the worse for plays. Would many of them were so much so entertaining.

"Fanny's First Play" proper lies really in the middle of the evening's performance. An induction acquaints us with the fact that a young author, who has written a play which she wishes to have performed by real actors and before real critics, but no public. Her father provides the actors and the critics. Through them Shaw exercises the untrammelled impudence, self-trumping and general ridicule of civilized humanity, in which he so loves to indulge in the prefaces to his plays.

But "Fanny's First Play" is itself a terrible shock to her father. It has never entered his rapt aesthetic imagination that his daughter could write of vulgar realism. He does not know that Fanny has done a month's hard work in an office as a militant suffragette. Imagine then, if you can, his grief when he witnesses her play, an audacious revelation of the pretenses of the "second middle-class" English family, her characters vulgar, shallow, and their children, and a young woman supposed to marry each other contrive to get locked up in jail for disorderly conduct, and assaulting the police. Each in very bad company, moreover, Bobby with "Dorothy Dora," of Gaiety type, and Margaret with a Frenchman who afterwards turns out to be married and to have no "intentions."

The chief interest, of course, centered in Mrs. Pike, the more one sees of her, the more one is puzzled to decide whether she is more to be admired for her remarkable versatility or on account of the general distaste she assumes her act. Whatever role she assumes, she forgets Mrs. Pike for the time, and sees only the character she portrays.

Three "gunmen" are a picturesque group in the cast, well played by Stanley James, Cecil Bowser, and W. Von Boeckman.

## COLUMBIA.

## Mrs. Pike in "Mrs. Bumpstead-Leigh."

There is nothing in the world the average man enjoys as much as the discomfiture of shams and frauds. When the dissecting is performed so highly amusingly as by Harry James in his comedy, "Mrs. Bumpstead-Leigh," and when the chief operator is Mrs. Pike, the enjoyment is wonderfully increased. When, therefore, Mrs. Pike began her week's engagement at the Columbia Theater, at yesterday's matinee, presenting for the second time in Washington this clever satire on the snobbishness of a certain class of American society, so-called, the large audience that had braved the elements experienced the keenest pleasure resulting from a delightfully clever play presented by a delightfully clever company.

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Two other performers stand out in bold relief. Nothing finer than Kate Mayhew, the girl who gives a most realistic picture of the irresponsible nature of Judy's wealthy roommates, and of the snobbishness of their relatives who come to visit them, while in the third act, when we have arrived in the old-fashioned yard of Lock Willow Farm, with its rows of sunflowers and hollyhocks, we find Mrs. Semple, the nurse of Jervis Pendleton, a golden-haired babyhood days just the simple, gentle, old-fashioned soul we would like to give the care of our own babies, and Jervis Pendleton himself, whether in his handsome library or in the study, or visiting Judy at Lock Willow, is a fine, manly figure whom we began to like the minute he first showed his appreciation of her, and determined to give her a chance.

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## B. F. KEITH'S.

George Washington would have sat up and said what a wonderful world this is if he had seen the bill at B. F. Keith's temple of the two-day yesterday. There is everything on the vaudeville menu that's right up to the minute and a big offering especially that gave two S. R. O. houses an opportunity to do some mental puzzling.

Mercedes, who has been press-agented all over the East and West, heard a great deal of things about his wonderful physique; furthermore, everything they've said has the stamp of truth. You know, time! Every spectator had the opportunity of testing his thought transference to music. All one had to do was whisper Mercedes the title of some musical selection, whether grand opera, rustic, sacred, selections, ballads, classics or patriotic airs. Miss Stanton, seated at a piano on the stage, played them all just like a human music box would do. Pat with the electrified legs had them laughing all the time. Sam Mann and company in "The New Leader" really knocked em off the seats. Belle Blanche, Washington favorite, gave her usual selection of stage and screen folk and was rewarded with handsome applause. Paul Gordon and Ame Rica know how to act, sing and do thrilling stunts. In her practice of Mrs. Semple, and Miss Margaret Sayre is capital as the matron of the John Grier Home.

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At first somewhat startled at the speaker's statement that "every American is, and should be, a true daughter of the Revolution," the members of the society, who had gathered at the Memorial Continental Hall to celebrate George Washington's birthday, it was clearly evident that he was in dead earnest, and that his words made a profound, almost thrilling, impression upon his listeners.

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## DAUGHTERS ARE URGED TO PUT PATRIOTISM WITHIN REACH OF MASSES.

BRECKINRIDGE SPEAKER

Assistant War Secretary, at Washington Exercises, Makes Appeal Against Exclusiveness.

"Women of America, wake up! Do not allow patriotism to be made a shrine at which only a select few have the right to worship. Do not permit this most sacred of all national assets to be lifted upon a pedestal too high for the poor to reach, too 'exclusive' for the tolling classes to do homage!"

Was P. because he heard, with his "mind's ears," the bugles of war calling America's manhood to the front to fight a common foe, or was it that he saw hard times in other forms ahead of the "land of the free" however, that he, when Henry Breckinridge, Assistant Secretary of War, thundered the foregoing words—and some more—over the heads of about 300 men and women, mostly women—who had gathered at the Memorial Continental Hall to celebrate George Washington's birthday, it was clearly evident that he was in dead earnest, and that his words made a profound, almost thrilling, impression upon his listeners.

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